



Daily Highlights

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MONDAY HIGHLIGHTS

- * Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali in Beijing on mission to strengthen UN-China relations.
- * More people died from tuberculosis in 1995 than in any other year in history, WHO reports.
- * Bitterness, fears and hatred of four years of war, underlying forces of Sarajevo Bosnian Serb population exodus: report by Secretary-General to Security Council.
- * Only 400 police officers, deployed throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina during January and February: Secretary-General reports.
- * Secretary-General expresses concern at Papua New Guinea decision to lift ceasefire on Bougainvillea.
- * Asian regional conference on role of public administration in economic development calls for countries to share experience in good governance and institution-building.
- * WFP begins emergency airlift of food to 22,000 people trapped by fighting in camps in western Liberia.

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Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali is in Beijing on a five day mission aimed at strengthening relations between the United Nations and China. While in the Chinese capital, Beijing, the Secretary-General will discuss China's crucial role in global affairs, and in the United Nations in particular, with President Jiang Zemin, Premier Li Peng and Vice-Premier and Foreign Minister Qiang Qichen.

The Secretary-General will seek the views of China, a permanent member of the Security Council, on new ways the United Nations can work to reinforce international peace and security to promote development. He will also solicit ideas from Chinese leaders on how best to resolve the UN's financial crisis. United Nations Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi says the Secretary-

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General held a meeting today with Foreign Minister Qiang Qichen, during which he exchanged views on global issues ranging from the conflict in Afghanistan to the looming financial crisis, threatening the very existence of the United Nations.

The two leaders also discussed the issue of Taiwan. The Chinese Vice-Premier said China was committed to the reunification of China through peaceful means and to the "one country, two systems" formula, according to the UN Spokesman. Mr. Qiang Qichen said China's resumption of sovereignty over Hong Kong and Macau should serve as a model, and that rather than opposing the development of democracy in Taiwan, China objected to external interference and to those who advocated independence and separation.

The Secretary-General for his part, reiterated once again that the United Nations position was clearly spelt out in the General Assembly resolution. He also briefed the Chinese leader on the status of negotiations with Iraq on the oil-for-food formula. They also discussed the status of the comprehensive nuclear test-ban negotiations, with the Secretary-General expressing the hope that the treaty could be signed before the end of September 1996. China for its part, had made a commitment not to be the first to use nuclear weapons, he was told.

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The World Health Organization (WHO), says more people died from tuberculosis in 1995 than in any other year in history. According to a WHO report, nearly 3 million people died from TB in 1995, surpassing the worst years of the epidemic around 1900, when an estimated 2.1 million people died annually.

The WHO warned that the TB crisis will continue to grow unless immediate action is taken. At current rates, up to half a billion people could become sick with TB in the next 50 years. The report says increasingly, these people may become sick with often-incurable multi-drug resistant TB.

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The bitterness, fears and hatred created by the past four years of war, are the underlying forces that led to the recent exodus of the Bosnian Serb population of Sarajevo, according to a progress report by Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali to the Security Council. However, he said the Bosnian Serb and the Federation authorities bear a great responsibility for this setback, as they did not show any determination to reassure and persuade the Serb population to stay on. This, he said, has resulted in another round of population movements along ethnic lines, further separating Bosnian Serbs and Bosnians, and delivering a telling blow to the multicultural nature of Sarajevo society.

According to the Secretary-General, the challenge in Bosnia-Herzegovina is to strengthen the links between the Bosnian Serbs and the Bosnian Federation authorities. The Secretary-General said the restoration of some degree of confidence at the political level is essential for the two entities to work together. But, he said it is understandable that the restoration of such confidence may be impeded by the deep wounds and distrust left by the conflict as well as by current political calculations. However, healing must be encouraged by conciliatory decisions and actions by the leadership of both sides.

The Secretary-General said in his report that persistent strains between the two parties are a major cause for concern. He cited a major territorial dispute in western Bosnia, disagreement over the status of Sarajevo, frictions between the two police forces and the failure of the parties to implement earlier agreements on economic and political matters, as factors that have exacerbated existing difficulties. He cautioned that unless the two communities make determined and sustained efforts to avoid conflict, establish cantons as agreed and strengthen Federation structures, divisive trends will increase.

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Only 400 police officers, have been deployed throughout Bosnia-Herzegovina during January and February, according to Secretary-General Boutros Boutros-Ghali. In a report on the UN Mission in Bosnia-Herzegovina, the Secretary-General said this figure included officers re-deployed from the UN Peace Forces (UNPF) mission, because only a few countries have been in a position to respond quickly to his request to provide police personnel for immediate deployment.

Only two-thirds of the monitors provided were deployed in Sarajevo to supervise the transfer of police authority to the Federation. It is important to recognize, he said, that the deployment of police officers to the United Nations missions depends on how swiftly Member States can release them from ordinary duty in their home countries. As of 15 March, a total of 67 monitors have been repatriated, 50 for not meeting the language criteria and 17 for not passing the driving test. To cope with this problem, the Department for Peace-keeping Operations has despatched a police selection assistance team to a group of countries to conduct in-country tests prior to the travel of the contingents. This, inevitably, has involved additional and avoidable expenditure, Dr. Boutros-Ghali said.

The Secretary-General has appealed to contributing governments to ensure that properly qualified personnel are provided for United Nations operations.

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The Secretary-General has learned with concern of an announcement by the Government of Papua New Guinea that it has decided to lift the ceasefire

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on Bougainvillea. UN Spokesman Ahmad Fawzi said today the Secretary-General regretted the loss of life resulting from the escalation of hostilities there.

He called on all parties to the conflict to exercise maximum restraint and to return to the negotiating table so as to find a lasting and peaceful settlement. The Secretary-General remained ready, as always to assist in facilitating a resumption of the peace process.

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A regional conference for Asia on the role of public administration in promoting economic development has concluded in the Philippines with a call for countries to share each other's experience in areas of good governance and institution-building. The Conference further recommended that, as a manifestation of Asian unity and cooperation, public administration assistance should be provided to countries in the region which were emerging from crises and conflicts.

It was also suggested that the United Nations hasten the setting up of a clearing house on management development which could be available to member countries on a regular basis. During the 3-day conference, participants exchanged views on policy planning and management, strengthening legal and institutional frameworks, civil service reform and training, resource mobilization and public expenditure management.

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The World Food Programme (WFP) has begun an emergency airlift of food to some 22,000 women, children and elderly people trapped by the fighting in camps in western Liberia. A WFP release says almost 100,000 refugees and displaced people have been trapped without food in Cape Mount County on Liberia's border with Sierra Leone, since fierce fighting closed the highway to the area in mid-December 1995. WFP officials in Monrovia said they were getting reports that five people a day were dying of malnutrition in Cape Mount County.

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